

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 05795 230238Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8862
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 5795

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EINV, OPIC,LT
SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL ON AMB YOUNG BY PERMREP MOLAPO
OF LESOTHO

REF: A. STATE 295319; B. STATE 301324

1. SUMMARY: DURING COURSE OF 30 MINUTE COURTESY CALL ON
AMBASSADOR YOUNG, DEC 21, LESOTHO'S UN PERMREP (MOLAPO)
REVIEWS BILATERAL RELATIONS, AID TO LESOTHO, AND COMMENTED
ON POSSIBILITY OF ECON SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR MOLAPO OPINED THE DISCUSSION BY THANKING
AMBASSADOR YOUNG FOR GRANTING THE COURTESY CALL, NOTING
THAT HE WOULD BE RETURNING TO LESOTHO ON JANUARY 25, 1978
TO ASSUME A CABINET POST. AMBASSADOR YOUNG NOTED THAT
LESOTHO WAS A STAUNCH FRIEND OF THE US AND INQUIRED ABOUT
THE STATUS OF THE PROGRAM AND PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT
OF LESOTHO'S AIRPORT.

3. AMBASSADOR MOLAPO REPLIED THAT ABOUT 20 MILLION IN
ASSISTANCE GRANTS HAD BEEN RECEIVED AND ANOTHER 12 TO
14 MILLION FROM VARIOUS DONORS HAD BEEN PLEDGED. LESOTHO
WAS APPRECIATIVE FOR THE LEVEL OF US OPIC INVESTMEN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 USUN N 05795 230238Z

AND LOOKED FORWARD TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ECON-
OMY, PARTICULARLY ITS WATER RESOURCES. HE NOTED THAT
CANADA, IRAN, THE US HAD FORTUNATELY EXPRESSED INTEREST
IN SUPPORTING LESOTHO'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND EXPORT ITS
HYDRO-ELECTRICITY. AMBASSADOR YOUNG REAFFIRMED THAT
LESOTHO COULD COUNT ON US SUPPORT FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT
OF WATER RESOURCES. CONTINUING,HE OBSERVED HAT

AMERICAN COMPANIES APPEARED TO BE UNDER PRESSURE TO GET OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA. THESE SAME PRESSURES, HE SAID, MIGHT BE RECHANNELED TO GET AMERICAN COMPANIES TO INVEST IN LESOTHO, SWAZILAND AND BOTSWANA.

4. AMBASSADOR MOLAPO AGREED WITH THE ABOVE THESIS AND STATED THE CONCERN THAT CERTAIN ARAB COUNTRIES, SUCH AS LIBYA WERE REPORTEDLY CONSIDERING A CU-OFF OF AID TO LESOTHO. AS EVIDENCE, HE CITED THE THREAT ARTICULATED BY A PLO DELEGATE AT THE UN (REPORTED DEPTTEL 301324). AMBASSADOR YOUNG OPINED THAT SUCH A THREAT WAS MOST PROBABLY AN OVERSTATEMENT.

5. AMBASSADOR YOUNG, IN CONFIDENCE, OBSERVED THAT THE US HAD COMMISSIONED A STUDY WITH RESPECT TO THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON LESOTHO SHOULD ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA BE EFFECTED. HE ASKED THAT AMBASSADOR MOLAPO FURNISH HIM AN ESTIMATE OF THE REPERCUSSIONS IF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA OCCUR. AMBASSADOR MOLAPO STATED THAT LESOTHO'S AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAD BEEN INFORMED BY ASST, SECRETARY MOOSE OF THE POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA. CONCERNING OIL, AMBASSADOR MOLAPO NOTED THAT IRAN HAD PROMISED TO CONTINUE TO SEEL OIL TO SOUTH AFRICA ONLY AS LONG AS SOUTH AFRICA ALLOWED THE FLOW OF OIL TO LESOTHO. HE THEN NOTED THAT RECENT FEASIBILITY STUDIES
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 USUN N 05795 230238Z

HAD CONFIRMED THAT ALL OIL SUPPLIES MUST PASS THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA. AS AN ASIDE, MOLAPO SAID THAT 60 PERCENT OF LESOTHO'S LABOR FORCE ENGAGED IN SOUH AFRICA. CONSEQUENTLY, ECON SANCTIONS WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THIS "CAPTIVE LABOR" FORCE.

6. CONCERNING LESOTHO'S ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY FOR INCREASED FOREIGN INVESTMENT, AMBASSADOR YOUNG INDICATED THAT THE US MISSION TO THE UN WOULD BE DISPOSED TO HOST A MEETING BETWEEN LESOTHO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' AND US BUSINESSMEN. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE OBSERVED THAT THE ISSUE OF FREE ELECTIONS IN LESOTHO IS SOMETIMES RAISED IN WESTERN BUSINESS QUARTERS. SMALL COUNTRIES, HE SAID, MUST BE LIKE "CEASAR'S WIFE" IF THEY ARE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. AMBASSADOR MOLAPO RIPOSTED THAT HE WAS WELL AWARE OF LESOTHO'S SHORTCOMINGS AND SAID HE HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO ASSUME A CABINET POST BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN ORDER TO PAVE THE WAY FOR FREE ELECTIONS.

7. THE MEETING CONCLUDED ON THIS POINT WITH AMBASSADOR MOLAPO ENTHUSIASTICALLY STATING THAT HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONSIDER PROPOSING A MEETING OF US BUSINESSMEN

AND LESOTHO OFFICIALS IN NEW YORK, TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

8. COMMENT: MISSION IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO
HOSTING A MEETING OF LESOTHO OFFICIALS AND US BUSINESSMEN,
ALONG LINES OF RECENT USG/LIBERIAN INVESTMENT
MEETING OF DEC. 8 (REPORTED MONROVIA 8296)
YOUNG

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